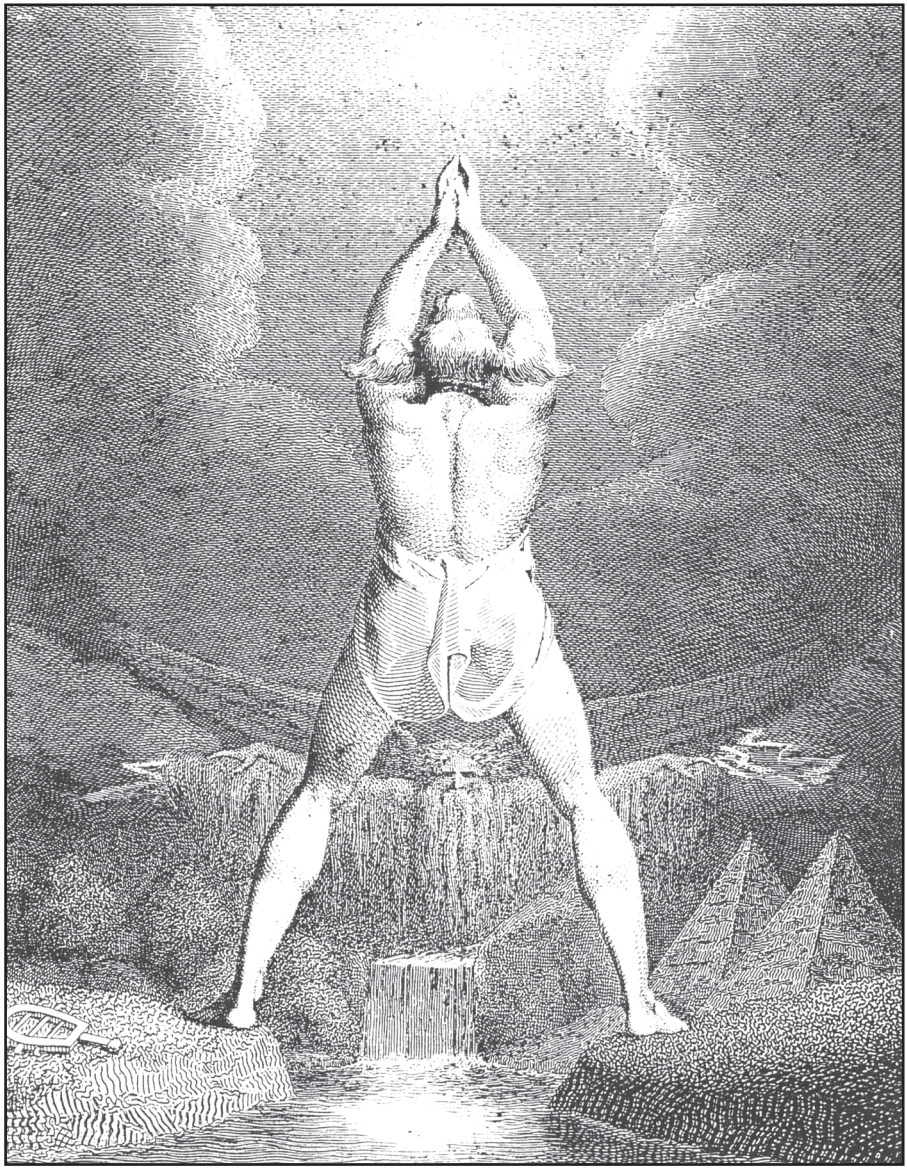
Peter Lamborn Wilson
Gothick
Institutions



Fertilization of Egypt

Xexoxial titles by Peter Lamborn Wilson

Aimless Wandering: Chuang Tzu's Chaos Linguistics

1993, 28 pgs, 7x8.5

This essay examines the role of language in Taoist philosophy, specifically the "inner chapters" of Chuang Tzu. Several points of similarity are found between Chuang Tzu's teachings and those of present-day Chaos Theory. Given this, an argument is made for a linguistics based on the overabundant possibilities of language, a "chaos linguistics" that may in turn give rise to an "anarchist poetics."

The Universe: A Mirror of Itself

1992, 32 pgs, 7x8.5

"We might well emphasize certain aspects of [Charles Fourier's] social teaching which possess an almost eery resonance with our own contemporary politique. The Harmonian Way still overflows with potential for enriching our post-Situationist, post-dada, post-anarchist epistemology, pataphysical driftwork, poetic terrorism, TAZ-praxis, etc . . . " This pamphlet was presented by the Author in its entirety at the First Conjunction of the Bender Hollow Phalanx & "G" School Association during the 1992 Dreamtime Corroboree.

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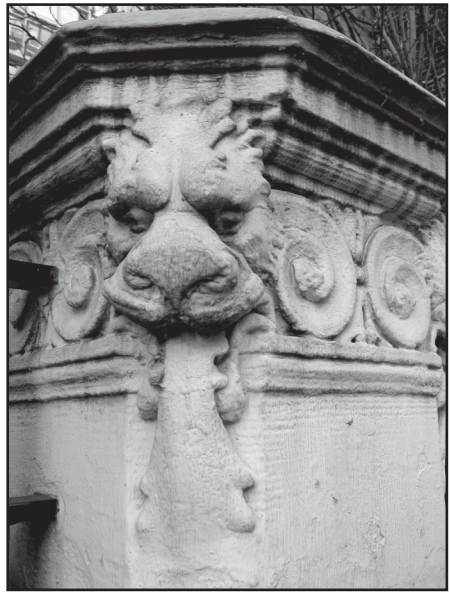
Peter Lamborn Wilson



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Pg. 11 - Liaizon Wakest (Kingston, New York)
Pg. 24 - "Flora attired by the Elements" by H. Fuseli and W^{m} Blake
from Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden*
Pg. 48 - "Gloriosa Superba"
Pg. 55 - Wedgewood's anti-slavery medal
Pg. 59 - Liaizon Wakest (N. Engelbert's "Grandview"; Hollandale, Wisconsin)
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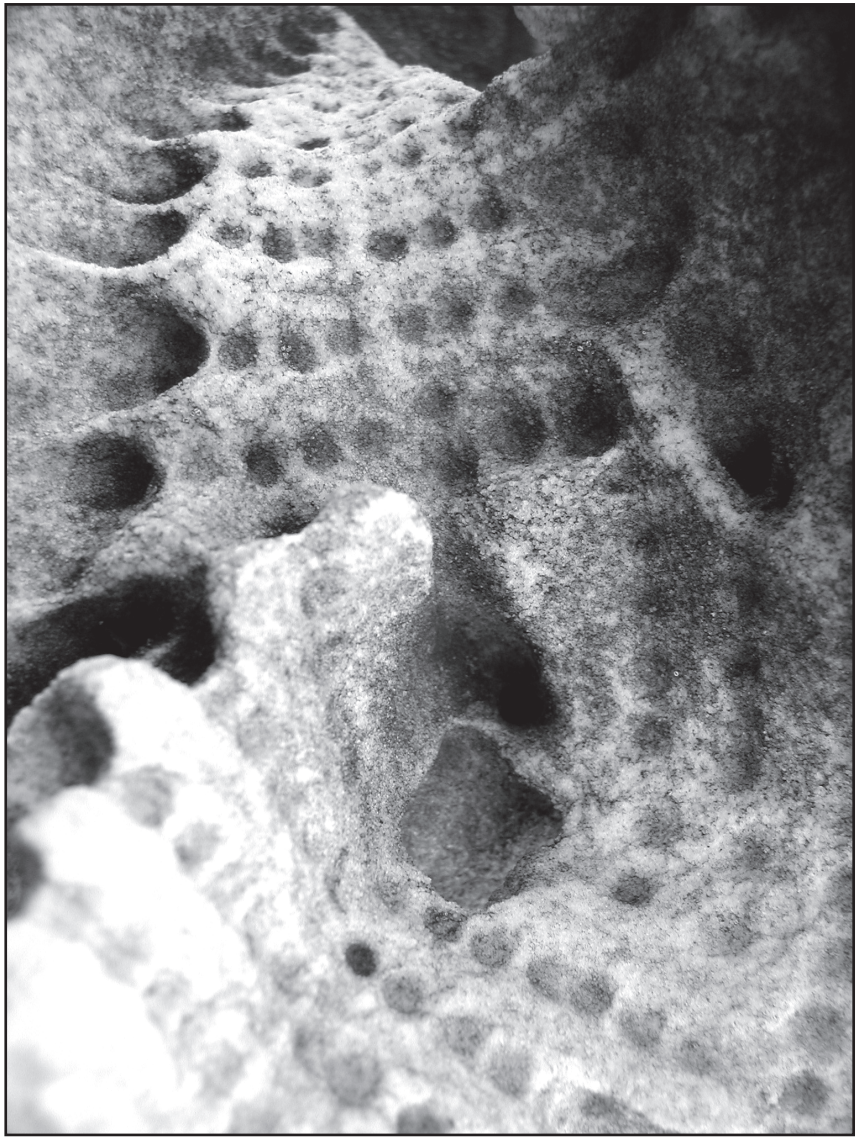

Sion County:
Fragment of a Pastoral Letter

Sion County is remote, rural, and poor, and always has been. Around 1870 a breakaway sect of German Amish-type farmers—the Sabbatarian Anabaptists or "Seventh Day Dunkers," moved there from Pennsylvania and settled down in the river valleys of the country's northeast.

In the mountainous northwest lies the small reservation of a band of Iroquois. The Indians and the Dunkers have always held to distant but amicable relations though nowadays the Protestants tend to disapprove of the bingo and fireworks concessions with which the tribe supplements its income.

In the 1960's a number of hippies invaded Sion County. At first there was some conflict with the locals, but by now the hippies have mellowed and settled down. Some of them joined a small eccentric split-off sub-sect of the Dunkers. Some practice permaculture or alternative agriculture; a few of their farms are very serious and self-sufficient; others work in "green" construction and trades, including black-smithing and carriage-building, since so many locals use horses rather than cars. And of course some grow hemp.

By the 1980's, the county had begun to rival the emerald Triangle, and the Feds were beginning to sniff around. Something had to be done! A "Combine" was organized among the hemp growers and smugglers, and an interesting political force emerged based on anonymous funders and a small libertarian faction of the local Republican Party. The Combine managed not only to infiltrate the Republicans but also to win control of the county, including the offices of sheriff, district attorney, judge, etc. The Combine also earned the support of the Dunkers by opposing "development" and . . . [text missing] . . . transmuted under this weird Libertarian/Welfarist coalition.

Everything possible is voluntarized—but funded by the County. The one public high school in the region is privatized but taken over by a non-profit alternative education group funded by the County. Zoning is more-or-less abolished, but a Green Covenant is circulated, and any non-signers are boycotted or otherwise driven out of the region. An extremist vigilante group has vandalized or destroyed a few structures deemed ecologically offensive; somehow the Sheriff never manages to apprehend any of these mysterious eco-warriors.

The county capital, Sion City (pop. 18,000 or so), has the plastic rural highway fast-food sprawl and rundown 19th century backstreet gloom of any similar sad place in the bioregion—but in a way this is mere camouflage. The fast-food franchises have been bought out by whole-food/organic collectives, which are funded by the County. Still they use names like Tastee Burgers or Salad Bar & Grill; the locals get a lot of amusement out of this sly nomenclature. The Public Library consists of four pink double-wide mobile homes, but contains amazing collections. It's as if the whole town was a disguise.

"The danger," says the Sheriff, "is that the place could become too damn picturesque. Dunkers in black hats in their buggies, a few Indians in traditional gear, spaced-out tie-dye types; a tourist trap, Woodstock! We don't like tourists around here, do we! And as Debord would put it, we don't want to work at the job of representing some quaint notion of authenticity just to become the Exotic Other for a media-poisoned shower of zombie voyeurs!

"Maybe you'd prefer some Jeremiah on thorazine stumbling out of the Time Magazine of your head—hollywood Jerusalem grand guignol cheapjack prognostications of nuclear ho-hum & SciFi African plagues—Y2K, harmonic convergence, yuppie Rapture—a culture gets the Armageddon it deserves—fire ice whimper bang or eternal sit-com, no, it's all far more interesting than we deserve."

Up-country, however, there's no pretence of normalcy. The Dunkers are living in the 18th century; some of the hippies and Indians are heading back toward the Stone Age. The remotest valleys are given over to hemp plantations and/or bizarre drop-out cults. Over a third of the County has no electricity, other than a bit of solar, and no mail delivery. The Combine or the County own much of the wildest land in various forms, including parks and preserves.

The Sheriff told me, "Naturally we 'deplore' the idea of funding utopia by crime. I admit that Sion County has some disagreeable aspects. But how can you hope to maintain even such a flawed and low-level utopia in a 'time of war' without some alternate economy? A Green Liberated Zone would be impossible; we all know it wouldn't be permitted. We try to think global—but we have got to act local."

The Monastery of St. John-in-the-Wilderness was built in 1910 by a group of Anglican Benedictine monks who intended to proselytize the nearby Indian reservation. But after a dim career it burned down in 1963 and the Church sold the ruin and the land (hundreds of acres) to an investor who later sold it to the Combine.

The monastery gardens and greenhouses were taken over by the Society for the Interiorization of Lost Knowledge (SILK), a small group of Combine research "scientists" who began experimenting with ethno-botany and bio-assay work. They constructed a secret underground "alchemical" lab.

The ruined monastery and the ramshackle but habitable Abbot's House or Abbey were turned over to another group that organized itself as the Monastery of St. John-in-the-Wilderness, Order of the Resurrection, Anglican Benedictine (Non-Juring): the "Greenfriars." The Christian identity is useful as camouflage, but some of the members are into it sincerely. They perform regular masses in the Abbot's Chapel, and in summer organize "Sacred Concerts & Festivals" in the picturesque and spruced-up ruins of the old monastery.

Some of these festivals are fuelled by the very potent liquors and concoctions of SILK, and some of the monks work in SILK's gardens (for surprisingly healthy salaries paid in cash). The monks grow vegetables and keep a few chickens and goats, but are not involved in subsistence farming. Needless to say, the Order receives a grant from the County in return for leasing some of their remote acreage to the Combine.

About half the brothers and sisters live in the old Abbot's House, and half are scattered through the woods in various caves, Taoist huts, Franciscan oratories, or prefab yurts. Besides the monks themselves there is also a "tertiary order" of friends, associates, allies, relatives, regular guests, and correspondents—maybe 20 fulltime live-ins and 100 occasional "retreatants." [See Appendix A]

The Rule of the Monastery is No Rule: anarcho-monachism. The monks have adopted a Benedictine identity only because the original foundation was Benedictine. But in fact, they've found some inspiration in St. Benedict's Rule. Once the bits about chastity, obedience, humility, punishment, and excommunication were deleted, they still liked the basic idea. In the original

text, they found a description of the "four kinds of monks" including the "Sarabaites, which are the worst kind—unschooled by any rule. Their only law is the pleasure of their desires; whatever they wish or choose, they call holy. They consider whatever they dislike unlawful." Half-jestingly, the monks claim to follow the Sarabaite Rite.

They've retained Benedictine titles and forms of organization: an Abbot, Canons to assist the Abbot, a Cellarer (logistics and supplies), Provost (ritualist), and Porter (security). They follow the rules of weekly kitchen service and weekly Reader, and also the Rule of One Hemina (1/4 liter) per day allowance of good wine. They wear, both sexes, an adapted version of the Benedictine habit: homespun green—at least on formal occasions.

But aside from monkish play and conviviality, what holds them together are common interests. The first and all-embracing one is negation—a desire or need to escape from the vulgar materialist world; to retreat, whether for spiritual or political or even "military" reasons; whether permanently or periodically. [See Appendix B]

For various motives both practical and theoretical, the Greenfriars have adopted a neo-Ludddite approach to tech that owes much to the nearby Dunkers—especially since the Anabaptists' shops and workshops provide the tools and skills needed for a comfortable low-tech life. Moreover, "Whole Earth Catalogue"-styled tech can be used to supplement Dunker resources since the monks have no religious injunctions to observe against zippers or can-openers. They even keep an old pick-up truck for emergencies, though they prefer horses.

SILK uses solar and other off-grid sources of electricity but the monastery and Abbot's House are un-powered and lit by candles and oil lamps. The Sacred Concerts and other monastic events utilize daylight or torchlight, etc. The basic rule of all Luddism, whether religious or secular, is to use only technology that will not "injure the commonalty"—therefore they agree to have (on the premises anyway) no computer, no TV, no telephone, nothing to replace human contact and connection with mediated representation (as the Sheriff would say).

Perhaps there's something a bit precious and artificial about this luddery, since the monks are not self-sustaining like the Dunkers or the

more successful permaculturists. They've made certain choices on the basis of pleasure and beauty. As the Abbot says, "We're not really renouncing anything . . . nice. All of us feel the absence of electricity as an immense luxury. Our velvet nights are set with more than stars." Some of the hermits have their own hot tubs.

On the positive side, the Order's common interests center on "lost knowledge." They believe that their research may help to inspire and even direct the growth of a global green spiritual movement. As Universalists, they nevertheless have no truck with any New-Age multi-culti interpretations of "tolerance"; as the Unabomber said, "You can do anything you want—as long as it's unimportant." Rather, they seek certain non-negotiable constellations within all spiritual human manifestations, and on these, they maintain strict intolerance and an unwillingness to compromise.

They're also very interested in secrets, which they define as anything not found on TV or the Internet. The Abbot says, "We should cultivate secrets against the day when the unknown might regain its power."

The brothers and sisters follow their own interests but regular sessions are held for discussion and development of group projects. One major interest for some lies in the "Western occult tradition," especially serious Renaissance hermeticism and alchemy. Other shared research includes Christian ritual, particularly chanting, which is practiced for its "psychedelic" effects (and as rehearsal for Sacred Concerts). Fancy gardening—flowers and herbs for tinctures and distillations—"spagyric medicine." There's a fad for calligraphy and copying manuscripts, which generates a bit of extra income as well. They spend most of their "grant" on books, although they do have an excellent 2' telescope that provides a lot of entertainment. This is an homage to Johannes Kelpius, the German Rosicrucian who founded "The Woman in the Wilderness" in Pennsylvania in 1694. He brought to America: the first serious telescope, to scan the skies for signs of the coming End!; the first harpsichord; one of the first printing presses. He admired the Indians' religion, and lived in a cave practicing alchemy and composing hymns.

Quilting bees are held on winter evenings with readings from literature and philosophy like the Benedictines—the monks are devoted to viva voce readings—or like the old anarchist Egyptian and Cuban cigar workers, or the radical tailors in 18th century London. Dining well is another

shared obsession, at least with the group that cooks and eats in the Abbot's House, who claim inspiration from Rabelais, from Fourier's "Gastrosophy," and chapter one of Brillat-Savarin's *Physiology of Taste*. By contrast, some of the hermits are strict vegetarians or raw foodists, etc.

It may be that some of the monks are engaging in "revolutionary activity"—but what exactly? since they could scarcely be preparing for armed insurgency . . . who knows? Maybe they're growing mushrooms for the Combine, or counterfeiting Euro-dollars, or providing safe caves for anti-global activists on the lam. Maybe they've made a breakthrough in occult science—say, the therapeutic use of hieroglyphic emblems to "de-program" human awareness from media/consumer trance? Or maybe it's all another layer of camouflage, like the famous ghost that haunts the monastery and keeps idle gawkers and tourists away.

The Greenfriars consider themselves committed to certain local things and people because they're living in a certain place and want to remain there. They maintain collegially close relations with some of the elders on the Reservation, and a few pious ecstatics amongst the Sabbatarians, but they also see themselves in the American Romantic tradition, as adherents of the "Religion of Nature" of the Transcendentalists and Hudson River School painters. And needless to say, Sion County is beautiful and relatively unspoiled, at least in the northern mountains. According to . . . [text missing] . . . [See Appendix C]

Appendix A

Everyone's bewitched but no one cares
we have one universal evil eye to share
like flies beguiled by television's glare
or three ugly sisters with their empty stares.

There's always a worldly world and one to flee
into some desert no one else can see.

A Word from the Abbot:

A secret unknown to the worldly about the desert: it's a positive pleroma of pleasure compared to the arid deathscape of vespuccian jerk kultur, that bleeding babylon without the courage of its convictions—seduction without desire—the Universal Mall—safety rules, litigation, crash-worship, spleen, worldwide surveillance. Yes by comparison a dank dave, solitary pine barren, silent summer mountain—the "stupidity of rural life" (Marx)—seems like wallowing in luxury billions couldn't buy. The real ascetics are gritting their teeth in traffic jams, TV/PC screens bathing them in leprosy-light, other people's music, vicious boredom. Anyone who doesn't go postal deserves beatification.

Appendix B

A Letter from the Abbot:

When you're beaten Von Clausewitz calls for retreat
rather than senseless going down in defeat
Query: have we retreated far enough?
invisible yet? translucent? gossamer stuff?

Militant monks know when to head for the mountains for a century of
boxing practice.

A monastic order founded and decreed
in the hinterland beyond the emerald city
the hidden Imam's jasper isle: a seed exempt from the gaze of the dead
and their sterile pity.

Li Po could kick back and unplug the phone
uncork some applejack, feel right at home.

Once I saw green moss growing inside a Dublin omnibus—
like Dali's "Rainy Taxi."
If science has conquered nature why does it keep beating the dead horse?
The next stage: mail-order monasticism. Text itself as ectoplasmic reverie.
Dear Reader: a message from the Abbé: to each their own cinnabar grotto
or Egyptian cave.

Hocus Pocus means this is the body
just as much puzzle as soul
whatever New Age twaddle seems to work
channeling the old black mole

We know our Blake and Paracelsus. Nobody here but us Nolans.
Mushrooms and the
voices of the dead: exfoliation of spirits.
According to Gustav Meyrink the nausea that overcomes us occasionally
even in
museums must arise from the fact that sooner or later everything made by
humans begins
to stink of the charnel house.

The conquistadors forgot that they themselves
were animals not aristotelian elves
"arguing with something Plato said"
or tidying up their vast linnaean shelves

If only our bad karma would permit it
I'd like us to be ornamental hermits
not cranks who can barely keep their logs afloat
or dionysiacs without a sacrificial goat.

Appendix C

There I see us bathed in light in rain
hoping Romanticism didn't die in vain
saying our beads or inviting each other to supper
wreathed in clouds and overcoming pain.

In mourning for the idea of the woods
psychic space/time pollution blues
almost as bad as being in love
this thinking about distant mountains and money

Seems you can't get one without the other
no car no hunt club no socialism
property tax on the taoist hermitage
electromagnetism no peace no quiet

Knowledge of mountains as source of pain
but dreamy (an anaesthetic revelation)
as real estate itself. Atavistic
the summer camp the tactical retreat

astral travel on february nights.

Gothick Institutions

I

REMOTE VIEWING

Imagine an alternate dimension where
dervishes are roaming around America
sects of Swedenborgian hobos etc.
You're there camping in the graveyard
long black hair in tangles, ghostwhite face

II

STORM HARP

"The world is linked by invisible knots."
— Athanasius Kircher, *Magneticum naturae regnum* (Rome 1667)

"Each stone comes into existence anew each moment, continuing to generate itself through all infinity."
— Johann Wilhelm Ritter

1.

Internal exile. Themepark of the self. Wilderness Preserve: an oxymoron for morons. Return to yr cubicles refreshed by interpretation. Nowadays you can't step in the same river even once.

Knocking at the door: police or ghosts?

> A color annoys us because
> ironically we can no longer use it:
> the Luminists'ld die for such a view—it's
> exotic to them as Jerusalem or Peru.

The sun dips its brush in river's palette & paints a shivering square of light through the window—like the room with no door in Meyrink's *Der Golem*.

What would it mean to be anti-Manichaean? Anyplace beyond the commodity's reach can only be defined by the commodity's absence, its failure to arrive.

Only the Poor imagine things for free—
The rest pay Microsoft a user's fee.

Extradition: Home is where, when they want to make you come back, they can. In Afghanistan certain sufi shrines were considered *bast* or Asylums, where Law couldn't reach. Around 1971 at the Dargah of Abdullah Ansari outside Herat I saw refugee criminals including murderers living inside the walls as beggars, not exactly free but not in prison either, surrounded by pine trees & blue breeze rather than *bars* & *chains*. Outside, the World Bank was already crouching patiently like the heat-death of the universe.

When you return the whole neighborhood has disappeared. One morning you wake transformed into a giant existentialist. When you get back the whole mountain has disappeared, transformed into a parking lot, to find yourself the star of an exquisite surveillance by the blind panopticon of global neo-liberalism. The Eye of Horus replaces the pyramidion. Where is this so-called river? Is it an idea or a river? The machine has no feelings. Help the police: beat yourself up.

Now dozens of July bats
zigzag up & down the Rail Trail
symbols of happiness
guardians of the house
its reality, its spookiness.

2.

"The matter of song is warm air, even breathing, and in a measure living, made up of articulated limbs, like an animal, not only bearing movement & emotion, but even signification, like a mind, so that it can be said to be, as it were, a kind of aerial & rational animal."

— Ficino, *Op. omn.* (563)

"Certainly no one in their right mind will think that an image fashioned in the spirit of my fantasy can go out of my brain & get into head of another man."

— Erastus (ca. 1572)

Elevated by the elevator, love spills over
the groceries like an all-day toothache:
every live performance now a tombstone in
some cybercemetery where it haunts the
placid vale at push of button. The traces
of everything we lost, obligatory as fifth-rate
heroin: everyone's free but no one cares.
I know it's mine because I paid for it.
Music? Our machines will do that for us.

All my life I've had reincarnation flashes of the late Mughal period. When I visited Delhi I pinpointed the flashes in the old suburb of Qutub Minar around the time of Akbar II or Bahadur Shah. The dense foliage, as in a Rajput miniature, faded in & out: kiosk, balcony, jacaranda, rotten pearl, hookah, betelnut, wine, bhang, poetry, evening monsoon, appropriate raga, parrots, palmetto, veranda, throbbing surbahar: or else for some reason I hear scratchy 78s, Persian "classical" piano in the old Radio Tehran style, re-tuned like a qanun, unpedalled, played with four fingers, shimmering & broken like those Shiite shrines covered inside & out with mosaics of shattered mirrors.

Someone recites:

I visited the poetic salons
I tried to sublimate my ghazals

to mere masks of the divine. But God
is still nothing but you at a distance.

Knots are tied & breathed on somewhere
I raised the wind but it blew back in my face.

Your presence acts like poison but
absence & disgrace are no cure.

Solomon'ld crawl to lick the feet
of any wizard with 1/10th the power of yr gaze.

If I could leave myself to you in my will
I'd deign to consider Death & Resurrection Day

and so on with various paradoxical clichés in the Hindustani style. What happened next? Perhaps the Mutiny broke out. I'm not sure the surbahar had even been invented by the 1840s or 50s, and certainly not the Persian piano! Also I don't believe in reincarnation, probably met these ghosts in a library of books stained with old ectoplasm & drilled with wormholes—an etching of overgrown ruins seen in a certain slant of rainy-season light, like the cool indifference of all pubescent poets.

In this sense, music will die.

3.

"Like numbers, words derive their value from the position which they occupy, & their concepts are, like coins, mutable in their definitions & relations, according to time & place."

— J.G. Hamann the Magus of the North, *Socratic Memorabilia, Compiled for the Boredom of the Public by a Lover of Boredom*

"Ruin on the Coin for insincerity & deceit
The yellow one with two faces like a hypocrite"

— *Assemblies of Al-Hariri*

This may be the thousand-year flood:
mulberry trees drowned, Route 299
a placid blue lake right up to New
Canaan Rd. Miss Hemp's jade stamens
bloom once per millennium. Each time
it rains three days running I think
of sending out invitations:

After 6000 years gravity is so densely inscripted it hinders breathing. We pretend to despise nostalgia. We never miss our little powdered wigs. The past is a kind of pipe bomb. We'd be more nostalgic for the future, if only the aliens (as I always say) hadn't been such a big disappointment.

Rationalism denies the existence of spirits & thus deprives itself of the means or even language to deal with them when they not only persist but turn nasty. Defenseless on principle Materialism dematerializes both subject & object and leaves the spectral landscape haunted by weird verbs. The eye on the dollar bill is the evil eye. Witch cults, cargo cults, CyberGnosis.

> Rainy days assume the shape of an egg.
> Dream incubation keeps joggers off the streets
> a kind of scholarship of the void.
> Day is a bezel of grayness set with smells
> the loud little would-be suns of the trumpet vine
> & its jeweller the ruby-throated hummingbird.

It's not the flaubertian phrenzies of Pachomian anchorites that fascinate us but their bad organization, based on nothing but the cave, the desert, the wind, the lion. Or blue wind screaming over the Skelligs in the azure Irish Sea, monotonies & monochromies unfolding & exfoliating, face-to-face with some world-sized Angel.

4.

" 'Gather up the laughter in my gardens & don't bother with the figs.' "
— Venus, Speaking in Marsilio Ficino's *Book of Life*

"In my opinion it would be safer to commit oneself to medicines than to images."
— Ficino, *ibid.*

5.

"A much grander idea than all those toys (such as Aeolian harps) was the 'storm harp' I once read of. It was made of thick cords of wire that were stretched out at considerable distances apart, in the open country, & gave forth great powerful chords when the wind smote them."

— E.T.A. Hoffmann, "Automata"

i.

Paracelsus in Constantinople, 1521
receives the secret of the Spagyric Stone
from Solomon Trismosinus (a.k.a. Pfeiffer)
after their voyage to the Tartar Throne.

To the dual principles of Sulphur & Mercury
derived from that Manichee, Jabir ibn Hayyan
Paracelsus added the Salt of dialectic
when he declared reality trinitarian.

H. Corbin found in some Istanbul library
seventeenth century Paracelsan texts
translated into various Islamic tongues
like so many tombs of Christian Rosenkreutz

whose doctrine of Signatures finally explains
the hows & whys of Bruno's burning chains.

ii.

Yliaster the Forest of Stars

As Wackenroder says in *The Art-Crazed Monk*, better to be a slave
to Superstition than to System.

Dogstar / flame-colored flowers
tiger lilies / sweat & lemonade
humidity smudges the edges of huge green bowers
by inversion: everything cooling: shade.

iii.

Garlanded letters make links
with the usurious schemes of invisible idols.
Discipline of unreading: *mutus liber*
Thoth with a saturday-nite special.

Old hieroglyphs & woodblock emblems
are lolling around the house in the suffocating heat
of the dogdays—an uncentered labyrinth
exitless & exhausted in defeat.

Global warming: the unrelenting glare
of everything that's been named
unbreathing as dead moths on the screen door:
always language, always the same.

What cannot be named evades
the encyclopedia of mysterious debt
staggering drunk in a distillation of rain
outside naked soaking wet.

iiii.

Stage One: negate the trance of separation—sixty centuries inscribed on the body in kabbalistic penal colonies of the dollar bill: a tender hermeneutic, a neverending task—there is no Stage Two. *Bom Bom Mahadev*.

After purificatio
what chance of reconciliatio?
Somewhere in some far summerland
I have a witness. Separatio
makes for better poets & that's why
poets were banished by the Prophet & Plato.

Raven takes as many forms as you like:
pinecone floating on the pond
giant detachable penis
Unabomber poem
alchemist's *laura*:
he goes on without us:
distillatio.

Fourier's Androgynous Masonry / Inhabitants of the Sun
Diamond / Lion / August the month of Victory.

v.

Von Bombast says ritual & incense only draw little devils like flies to stinking meat. But after all he was a Lutheran or crypto-Moslem. Ritual got us into this mess & it'll have to get us out: liberation from the image through the image: a ladder of swords.

Ficino's planetary daemons
perfumes / colors / sijils / appropriate raga
forget the grim grimoires etc.
we're not dealing here with mere larva.

Hieroglyphic alchemy: lit-crit sublimed to the level of idol-smashing idol worship. Rosegarden of the Secret: language overcomes language in a palimpsestic delirium: face of the absent beloved anatomized & decoded: mole on cheek, night-colored tresses: features become letters, the face itself a calligramme.

Advocacy of entheogenic ceremonialism
constitutes a hangin' offense in U.S. legicide—
DMT Elves Declared Illegal Aliens
wetbacks from a non-existent outside.

vi.

Like finding yourself on the desert movie set
where they filmed the fake Moon Landing in '69—odd
as breaking out of the body bag of hieroglyphics
oppressive grammar of the corpse of God.

To resume relations with the elementals
in a deathbed reconciliation scene
from some victorian novel: gothic: chthonic
cathartic as a dervish's scream.

History's regenerable only by solidarity
of humans & devas in struggle against fate's adversity.

vii.

Lapis imaginalis: intercourse with shadows
the old-fashioned burglar's art of cutting keys
launch these emblems into the aether
of all stifling & exhausted days
like packages of rain or velvet bags of night
against all deadly orgone rays.

Invisible college on a visible mountain
the *rebus*, an act of language
you can only pay for it by becoming it
the catastrophe's just begining & the game
only works because I'm running it.

Auguries based on eleven kinds of lightning
Salamander Undine Sylph Dwarf Nymph or Dryad
for you this unplayed chord & sinister triad.

III

MONSTER GHAZAL

Posthumously the Monster's *Oeuvres complètes* appear
under the imprint of the Old Black Mole.

Midnight florist orphans, binding orchids,
overcome by tuberose, faint at dawn.

Sleek *monstre sacré* young King Farouk in fez
& frockcoat smokes a slender turkish oval.

Ogres are roadkill. The stench of mimosa drifts
in helical wisps of mist from beneath the bridge.

In evening-wear (black tie) he disappears
beyond the azure of the arctic waste.

Ruins are innocent as daguerrotypes—
the goverment would kill you if it knew.

In this light, roses look like monsters:
a kind of climax of odorous fright.

Flora attired by the Elements

IV

EDELPHUS

"You must know that the signs change each time."

— Theophrastus Bombastus Von Hohenheim (Paracelsus), *Liber de nymphis, sylphis, pygmaeis et salamandris*

1.

"Therefore, you receive the movement of world life in the movement of shining water and serene air, in fire that is reasonably distant, and in the movement of the sky, if you are yourself also moved, softly, and in a similar way, driving those gyres for their powers, avoiding dizziness, beholding the heavens with your eyes, turning them over and over in your mind."

— Marsilio Ficino, *Book of Life* (III/II)

2.

" . . . Nature emits a light by which it may be perceived from its own radiance."

— Paracelsus

3.

" . . . The end of a magical communication with Elementary Spirits is to restore our Edenic correspondence between man & the harmonial world of spirits, which in effect would be a restoration of the celestial condition of primordial humanity."

— A.E. Waite, *The Occult Sciences*

"Know farther yet: whoever fair and chaste
Rejects Mankind, is by some Sylph embrac'd:
For Spirits, freed from mortal Laws, with ease
Assume what Sexes and what Shapes they please."
— Pope, *Rape of the Lock*

Staring into a convoluted rock
Le Comte de Gabalis instructs the Abbé
in the faith of Spiritual Counterparts
marriages with the world of faery or the Dead
or the wives of their disciples—so they fled
to California & grew grapes instead.

Spiderweb cloaks & bluebell hats & flesh
white as bedsheets or the sickle moon
Atum Ra creates by jerking off
into the marsh of cosmic formlessness:
hyle desires the shape of shapeliness
Priapus the Tree, the gum, the astral balm
or Water of the East or Euphrates.

The morning Undine is your beloved
in the oracle of leaf-drop or bird call
& cool humidity of early Fall:
How to heal nature in ourselves without
ourselves in nature tangled hard as lust?—
Choose sex with Elementals or be damned
to the *nature morte* of Reason's tyrant dust.

The rain now ceases & the day awakes
No more will be revealed: the heart must keep
the Undine's secret for the Undine's sake
& change its wakefulness for mystic sleep.

4.

" . . . for they exist, and yet appear to us as in a dream."
— Paracelsus

a suffocating dream of missing the boat
(some expensive ocean liner)—
then sunbeams & solar cicadas
resume their incredibly boring symphony
elegant boredom like the last few volumes
of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*: the sleep
of the learned is worth more than
the prayers of the merely pious
pious pious, a rosin'd bow across
the chords of day.

5.

" . . . this you must know, that great things come from such people (the Elementals), who should be great mirrors held before man's eyes. But love has cooled down in many, and thus they pay no attention to the signs, intent only on usury, self-interest, gambling, drinking, matters that are interpreted by these beings, as if they were saying: look at the monsters, thus you shall be after death; let yourself be warned, beware—but nothing is done about it."
— Paracelsus

6.

" . . . I slipped softly to the window, and looked toward the river. Great clouds were driving restlessly through the sky, and the distant woods were rustling fearfully; it was as if my cottage shook, and moans and lamentations glided round it. On a sudden, I perceived a white streaming light that grew broader and broader, like many thousands of falling stars; sparkling and waving, it proceeded forward from the dark Fir-ground, moved over the fields, and spread itself along toward the river. . . .

" . . . The same year there came a blight; the woods died away, the springs ran dry; and the scene, which had once been the joy of every traveler, was in Autumn standing waste, naked and bald, scarcely showing here and there, in the sea of sand, a spot or two where grass, with a dingy greenness, still grew. . . . "

— Ludwig Tieck, "The Elves" (1811)

7.

"There is more bliss in describing the nymphs than in describing medals. There is more bliss in describing the origin of the giants than in describing court etiquette. There is more bliss in describing Melusine than in describing cavalry and artillery. There is more bliss in describing the mountain people underground than in describing fencing and service to ladies."

— Paracelsus

8.

" . . . Many philosophers were of opinion that Air is the cause of dreams, and of many other impressions of the mind, through the prolonging of Images, or similitudes, or species (which are fallen from things and speeches, multiplied in the very Air) until they come to the senses, and then to the phantasy, and soul of him that receives them."

— Cornelius Agrippa, *De philos. occ.* (I)

Insects that swoop in obvious patterns
which any pythagorean could quantify
strongly suggest the existence of sylphs
that carve curves for them to fly.

9.

"If you would recover the empire over the Salamanders, purify and exalt the NATURAL FIRE that is within you. Nothing is required for this purpose but the concentration of the FIRE OF THE WORLD by means of *concave mirrors* in a *globe of glass*. In that globe is formed a SOLARY POWDER, which is of itself purified from the mixture of other elements, and being prepared according to *ART*, becomes in a very short time a sovereign process for exaltation of the *FIRE that is within you*, and will *transmute* you into an igneous nature."

— Abbé N. de Montfaucon de Villars, *Le Comte de Gabalis*

10.

"When your eyes shall have been fortified with the use of the most sacred medicine, you will immediately discover that the elements are inhabited by singularly perfect beings."

— Comte de Gabalis

"As for what we think about what daemons are able to do, we think they do not so much dwell in certain material as they rejoice in being cultivated. . . .

" . . . The intention of the imagination has its force not so much in images or medicines as in the act of applying them and using them."

— Ficino (III/20)

"For these (sidereal) rays are not immediate, like the rays of a lantern, but like wines, and like sensual things they shine through the eyes of living bodies."

— ibid. (III/16)

"The earth supplies wine for (the spirit), the odor of wine is carried by water, song and sounds move the air, and light prefers the element of fire. With these four, then, the spirit is nourished, I mean, with wine, smell, song, and light."

— ibid. (III/24)

11.

" . . . All things are full of God and not without cause. . . . Also they called those Divine Powers which are diffused in things, Gods; which Zoroaster called *Divine Allurements*; Synesius, *Symbolical Inticements*; others called them Lives, and some also Souls . . . "

— Agrippa (I)

"For everything lives in chaos, that is: everything has its *abode* in chaos, walks and stands therein."

— Paracelsus

"Truly, if a fox or wolf could speak, they would not be very different."

— ibid.

Terra Gaia thirdborn of the first
mother shakti platform of creation
living treasure chest of the elements
your parasites under the sign of Hermes
call you to unveil your great SAGANI
spirits of earth air fire water
all our relations

Gnomes Sylphs Salamanders Undines
in dream or waking vision or reverie
in abandoned mines or palaces of clouds
athanor's glow or glimmer of rain
gravity & levity: one great animal
with more limbs than all the sentient stars
for the healing of nations

Not for gain or for sunken silver
not for secrets to steal & turn against you
not to command like Solomon or Faust
but only to learn to breathe together
for an alphabet of shared power
for the dark re-enchantment of the landscape
accept our libations

Goblins Kobolds tellurian Pygmies Gnomes
I the *edelphus* invoke you by these stones
by these jewels & metals of your dignities
& the high titles & dragon hoards
that only you have mapped & hidden
by your sparkling mines & pirate bones
& these lustrations

Dryads Fauns Silvestres kin of Pan
mountainy men & unapproachable groves
sweet tree wraiths & sylvan shade maidens
we summon you by noon by storm by Silenus
by intaglio seals of leaves on sunbeams
by verdigris skin of earth as you recall it
El Monte! prostrations

Sylphs Lemures Poltergeists & Winds
we invite you to fill these banners with your breath
spiritus itself: occult lepidoptera
invisible flowers echoes sighs & whispers
Nenufars of the four quarters & telepathy
we offer odoriferous clouds for your bodies
these suffumigations

Lizards of the sun: gila monsters of the hearth
by this flickering meteoric magnetic weapon
by your barbaric names Acthnici Lares Etesians
flesh of phlogiston sparks of intellect militant seraphim
salamanders: accept this burning brandy & frankincense
appear here clothed in light as we desire
greetings & salutations

Raindancers Melusines Mermaids Neptune's elves
conjured by your power to skry & dream
last & first by Moon & by our poison
by Shiva's semen & Phul the Angel of Undines
by Mercury's herbs & Soma your king
crystalline living fluids alchemize yourselves
in these distillations.

V

BLUE CASTLE

The idea of the castle
wants to come true—
never was a poem so blatant
in wanting to unwrite itself
into flesh & stone
to lose itself as text & find itself
as castle.

The Hudson Valley once was fancied
a kind of pre-industrial Rhineland—
millionaires bought castles in Europe
shipped them over & reassembled them
or copied them out of storybooks—
I can see one from my kitchen window
the wind blowing crystals of snow round
in prismatic swirls of sun
all the way to the mountain
& its gothick tower.

These castles are themselves the ideas of castles
they have no history—they're hallucinations
ruined abbey built to the order of a dream
watchtower raised to command a charming view
ancestral halls with no ancestors
other than Walter Scott, E.T.A. Hoffmann
or Washington Irving's Alhambra.

If you forget the vulgarity of the rich bastards
who paid for these piles
& take them simply as surrealist balloons—
if you can carry out an imaginal appropriation
of the castle & re-inscribe it
on a new landscape of meaning
pinetrees snow rocks frozen waterfall—
then you win the castle
the idea of the castle
its icicles & moss
& the wolfhounds sleeping before a fire place
the size of your kitchen.

I thought of a painter of the Hudson River School
who studies with Fuseli or Caspar David Friedrich
travels over Europe, N. Africa, the Holy Land
particularly inspired by Ireland & Morocco
returns to New York, hangs around with Cole,
Church, Durand, Bryant, Irving
makes a bundle on his landscapes & portraits
retires to the Catskills & builds a small castle
in Hiberno-Moorish style: square tower
of bluestone with windows based on
some palace in Fez—
at the top of a hidden clove
dark with hemlock like the Black Forest
overlooking a waterfall
& the luminous blue snow
of a January twilight

around 1843—just in time
for the Anti-Rent War. But our man
has imbibed the politics of Godwin
the Luddites & Chartists & Fourier
he's a friend of Thomas Devyr
& hides the local Calico Indians
in the castle when they're on the lam
after shooting the cruel landlord
in the winter dusk

he falls in love with a girl & marries
into a strange family called the Vonders
very like the Jukes & Kallikaks
part Dutch part Delaware Indian part Black
poaching drinking incestuous mad
involved in country witchcraft
or so the townsfolk claim—
his paintings become stranger & stranger
like Albert Pinkham Ryder
nobody buys them
& the local gentry cut him dead
spreading the rumor that he's drunk & insane
roistering away stormy nights with the Vonders
or drowsing on laudanum & tincture of Indian Hemp
he paints the castle walls with murals
of trolls & undines in Catskill landscapes
Indian burial grounds in moonlight.

After his death the castle falls into decay
reputed to be haunted & shunned by all—
the Vonders squat there for generations
till the Watershed Authority acquires the land
& tries to re-locate the rustics
to some housing project.
In the 1970s the matriarch of the clan
receives a visit from a wandering emissary
of AIM or Native American Church
who convinces her that the Vonders are Indians
& should reclaim their lost heritage.
Some of them move back to the woods
& settle around the castle
where nobody bothers them
"don't go up there—the Vonders'll
cut yer throat"

This would be the setting for my gothic tale
the hero an art historian on the track
of the forgotten painter—the castle last mentioned
in a WPA guidebook from the 30s
someone tells him it burned down
the public librarian—a nice old lady—
warns him against the Vonders. Finds an old map
eventually reaches the castle on foot.
The Vonders are living near it in tarpaper shacks
& Airstream trailers. Perhaps
they take him prisoner. Perhaps he's befriended
& released by a beautiful young Vonder.
Romantic interest. He discovers that the clan
have taken to acts of malicious vandalism
against the modern world such as
blowing up cellphone towers.
In a fit of enthusiasm he joins them
seems to become the reincarnation of the artist
or maybe possessed by his ghost

obsessed by the castle he moves into the ruins
works at restoring the murals.
A few old friends—poets & eco-terrorists—
track him down & join him
& the Vonders growing marijuana
distilling moonshine like a little court
or miniature phalanstery in the forest
this would be the end of the story
the last scene shows them setting out
from the castle to hunt on a winter day
cold & blue as a heaven of orgone
diamond azure dazzle of fresh snow
sharp pinetrees with hawks overhead
castle in the distance à la Breughel

This history of the near future is a blue flower
unattainable but necessary hence tragic
but to enter the castle would be a true outside
a forest inside a castle:
to live a heraldic life
listening to harp by fireside
with the forest inside yourself
a castle for your heart.

VI

PHANTASMATA

"What have we left to dream about?"
— Mary Shelley, "On Ghosts" (1824)

1.

A rendezvous in secret attic room
full length mirror in ornate gilt frame
yellowed & dim—furniture shrouded in sheets
rocking horse & box of costume jewels

This is what every human being wants
a magic candle a bowl of ink & blood
rain hitting the skylight abracadabra
astral projection a tender dribble of spit

In school we studied something about the history
of all those endless Sunday afternoons
lurid illustrations of the Hollow Earth
& its many delectable humiliations

velvet roses with imitation thorns
powered wig hair & make-believe tears

2.

Medieval storms are roiling past our casement
old as I am I can't control my mouth
tittering behind the heavy curtains
midnite in the Phalanstery garden

something like a chinese kung-fu slipper
but shiny patent leather black & arched
a ribbon colored like a day-old bruise
tied in a stiff bow above the toe

We're living in an 18th century etching
your bare sole on the floor chill as moonstone
& the butler—a comic figure—standing
in the shadows watching silently

a ritual stolen from the Pope himself
soap—basin—towel—self abasement

3.

One wore a mask that ended in a mustache
crumbling yellowed 19th century paper
between two palmtrees bright as candy drops
glistening with sweat—a cobalt sea

Gold coins draw ghosts like bluebottles to shit
& black ink pulses with the same iridescence
lolling on the junk's deck with a lacquered pipe
November plays the voyeur at the window

Nemo's bedsheets: starchy lateen sails
the butler (thinks) "Madam must never know!"
Tops—hoops—toys that require a whip
the smell of witchhazel or an ocean breeze

silken laces so tight they leave a mark
like a dry red ring of wine in an empty glass

4.

Forced to gather blackberries in the dusk
before the Pooka of November spits on them
bare hands & feet scratched & stained
lips painted the blue of day-old bruises

picking roses they might prick their fingers
wondering what happens outside the fairy tale
when the covers are closed in the stuffiness of night
how the gold ring lies swallowed in the fish's gut

Cold marble bench causes gooseflesh
found it for a dollar at a botanica
kneeling so uncomfortably in the pew
where it's too dark for the Bishop to see our hands

hands like roses—fingernails quite long
& none too clean. Cold rain in the park

5.

A smoking gown that burns without consuming
akashic vapors flickering on the skin
blue-silk germanic breeze between the legs
as far as we're concerned, yes, let it rain

Incense—the trembling butler in a trance
serves cakes & tea—like mist between the hills
tea spills on the flowers—wisps of steam
sour as a dog caught in the rain

black rubber boots flecked with blades of grass
the smell of the Vestry: soap, starch, lace
a quiet game—an animal that bites
& claims exalted titles for itself

This afternoon your genie of the lamp
where no one sees us hidden in the mist

6.

In certain cults the god is bathed in milk
suddenly eager for bedtime—ten o'clock
nine o'clock—why not an afternoon nap?—
victorian mourning jewels of hair & onyx

aryan skin—so politically incorrect
opal syrup blue vein painted ice
cut glass red as witchhazel in November
undinism in both senses of the word

almost too tight to breathe these stolen gems
dissolve on the tongue like apothecary's drops
lips stained green as goblin's mucous membrane
fish blue fingers stuck with ropey pearls

Those who have no name for their superstitions
fear us as they fear their own desires

7.

How many lacquered screens & blue teapots
of 18th century chinoiserie
have stolen souls away to crooked lanes
humpbacked bridges temples in the fog

peonies & willows icy pagodas
those are our faces at the lunar window
long silk sleeves—indeterminate sexes—
lost on the path to pavilions of cloud & rain

insidious Shang Ching reverie propaganda
you with your Fu Manchu style fingernails
the steam that rises from a single cup
blue with nostalgia blue with borrowed pain

a nap in the nursery—a scholar's stone—a ghost
or friendly fox with genitals of jade

8.

Stained glass—One wonders: stained with what?
chrism, crushed peaches, vitriol of gold
bodily secretions of the sylphs
slow november twilight drains away

smears on the bedsheet & its yellowed lace
where cold blue suns have licked it with their tongues
as they disappear into the tainted West
smelling of melted frost or unwashed linen

We monks are up to some obscure corruption
unhealthy ecstasies forbidden prayers
the narrow cells of cloistered acolytes
crepuscular lustrations & white stains

Our garden overgrown with liquid evenings
shivering in the chill of filthy kisses

9.

I felt that there were webs between your toes
& fingers, that your skin was reptile blue
yet taut as plums—& that your wide-set eyes
were globes of green as plump as bottle lamps

I sensed there was a grotto—ferns & moss
shelves of fluorescent medicinal fungus
slimey rocks & dripping weeping willows
where lithophones are heard on stormy nights

The "raindancers" undergo this transformation
or possession by a certain venom
& I was the charlatan shaman of the sect
interpreting the oracles of your limbs

your lips & alien teeth & hollow tongue
the scent of snake—ammonia & balsam

10.

Silenus naked rides astride a keg
Wandervögel crowd him with guitars
& nietzschean neckerchieves but not much more
on Baltic beaches long before the War

dionysiac sarcophagi
trundled out by Philadelphia Mummers
nudists in Airstreams from the Jersey Pines
scout troops lost on long-forgotten summers

bacchantes panthers eunuchs smooth as mice
mooning & flashing cross suburban lawns
in slo-mo exhibitionist parades
that empty the museums of their fauns

his turban blushes like a catawba grape
he jiggles his buttocks like an egyptian ape.

VII

AND/OR

a didactic poem
for Jack Collom & Gerrit Lansing

Gloriosa Superba

The Spectral Emanation of Linnaeus

Sterile gardens sewn with bones
unleash the botanicals of war
what we need is a *good* biography of L. Frank Baum
& the whole Midwestern anarcho-Swedenborgian milieu
not another apparition of Laura de Sade
& her snicketty scissors, the irrational counterpart
of all those cruel encyclopaedias.
Why the Highlands are so vastly improved
that nothing lives there now but sheep—
the savage clansmen all dispersed
in trailercamps around the former Confederacy—
divvied up in ha-ha's & hedgerows & genera
pornographic topiary & a fresh-air rating
only slightly better than Wormwood City.
More Light, Less Lite—please extinguish the
aufklärung before leaving for the night
the long night of the war on terror
war on every weed in the ditch
phantoms & pharmaceuticals.
Total eclipse of the flower
may cause permanent retinal damage
& can be viewed safely
only on television,
health experts warn.

Linnaeus and/or Swedenborg

Does it have to be a choice
so zero-sum & not win/win?
After all they were related by marriage
Linnaeus inducted Swedenborg into the Swedish Academy
for his trollwork in the paracelsan mines
No doubt they toasted their ancestress the witch
burned at stake, a wellknown herbalist.
Fourier's Apples & Pears
Jonathan Chapman's apples & Swedenborgian tracts
broadcast over Upstate NY, Illinois, Wisconsin
Patrons of Husbandry, Seven Fathers of the Grange
sole mystic inheritors of Eleusis
every one a pomologist.
Linnaeus coined the terms *Homo sapiens* & *Cannabis Sativa*
believed in the Garden of Eden source of all species
& dreamed up categories for Münchhausen's anthropophagi.
Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim
I got grisgris from his grave in Salzburg
Salt-town of the ancient bemushroomed Celts
advocating entheogenic ceremonialism for minors
13 or 14 hanging round the old swimming hole
always in dutch with the cops or A.M.A.
like some hobo revenge squad of the I.W.W.
or the boyscouts who died that Easter in Dublin
vagrant, wandervogel, wild goose, farmer's friend
Edelweiss Pirate, Jack of the märchen.
Dr Christopher Witt died very aged around 1760
last surviving member of the Rosicrucian fraternity
known as the Woman in the Wildernesse
outside Philadelphia on the Wissahickon River
Benjamin Rush mentions him often in his Journals
laughs at him for an old Paracelsan but notes
Dr Witt had the first copy of Linnaeus in America
left all his property to his freed slave Robert

whose ghost subsequently haunted the
old Germantown cemetery till it was
paved over sometime in the 1960s.

They were high on mushrooms
they were swimming naked
swinging on a rope tied to an ancient
cottonwood where kids dammed the creek
to form a diving pool, so the Town
sent police to saw down the tree—
Allen Ginsberg counted 250 rings on the stump
& wrote an angry letter to the *Daily Camera*.

You could also classify according to vibration (like smell)
or lunar mansion. Goethe & Steiner used Linnaeus
& so could you—just keep piling it on
layer upon layer like an ant farm—
point & name, a latter-day Adam
as Linnaeus himself often boasted
had himself painted in Lappish shaman gear
Romance of the Arctic—look at a map
centered on the North Pole but without the ice
you see a Mare Nostrum
corona borealis of bear cults & amanita muscaria
with Admiral Perry's hole-in-the-Pole
leading down into the Hollow Earth of Etidorpha
& its fungal architecture

you've seen them & heard their high piping voices
like Colonial Baroque cherubs
azure voices or lights chasing each other
around Old Balor's Tower in the nocturne night
like O'Carolan's harp with strings of silver not gut
little brown liberty caps—every night
they fly to Brittany & back
& steal the milk

A coelestial marriage (pardon the unintentional homoerotic implications) between fleshly Linnaeus & ectoplasmic Swedenborg in the spirit of Andreae's *Chemical Wedding*:

The Botanical Garden
of Erasmus Darwin.

The Botanic Garden at Litchfield

Erasmus Darwin chiefly remembered if at all for grandfathering the Theory of Evolution—which his ingrate grandson found too Lamarckian for further remark—a dizzying unfixity of species—all life descended from one unicellular hermetick aboriginal chaos egg. Erasmus D's 60-year Programme was the popularization of Linnaeus by means of long epic poems in which most parts are played by plants & animals—written in rhyming couplets like Pope—whose *Rape of the Lock* greatly influenced *The Botanic Garden*—Pope used an old occult "tale" called *Le Comte de Gabalis* as source for Paracelsan elemental spirits. Darwin adopts Paracelsan categories wholesale & crosses them—hybridizes them with Linnaeus. The result is pure proto-Surrealism. Linnaeus arranged his species & genera acc. to an "artificial" (i.e., arbitrarily chosen) system based on sexuality—number of stamens & pistils etc.—but even so Darwin found him too dry—animated or eroticized him by bringing all plants & flowers to life as nymphs sylphs undines & salamanders engaged in extremely salacious orgies—"the loves of the plants"—ED seems esp. obsessed by the image of *a wet woman*—perhaps the widow he adored & planted his Botanic Garden to lure like a butterfly & seduced with his poems & married her & lived happily ever after. D was a North country doctor, gentleman inventor & improver, friend of Watt & Wedgewood, correspondent of the Royal Society, rationalist, enthusiast for French liberty. He knew Sir Humphrey Davy & Godwin. In the preface to *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley tells an old anecdote about ED that he once carried out the alchemical experiment of bringing to life *a piece of vermicelli*. In fact he'd revived some desiccated dormant

little worms or *vorticelli* by soaking them in water—nothing supernatural about it—but the error became Godwin family lore. At first Walpole, Scott, Coleridge & Wordsworth admired ED but later turned against him for political & poetic reasons—Shelley always liked him. The Anti-Jacobins lambasted him in a cruel but funny parody, "Loves of the Triangles"—but Darwin remained a staunch radical. The Botanic Garden is illustrated by Fuseli & W^{m} Blake (who also worked for Wedgewood)—a splendid portrait of goddess Flora, mysterious scene of ancient Egypt, etc. Not only does the poem make literary use of Paracelsus & hermeticism in general, it also uses them scientifically. That is, the *BG* is a hermetic poem, a deliberate hermeticization of Linnaeus. So far the only other reader I know who seems to have noticed this is poet Gerrit Lansing in his great "In Erasmus Darwin's Generous Light" (recently republ. in *A February Sheaf*). ED's modern biographer covers up the hermetic aspects or apologizes for them as mere poetry. Darwin founded the Lunar Society with his mechanistic friends Watt, Wedgewood & Priestly—they met every full moon—but unlike them he had a secret lunar personality. Like Blake he can be considered a vital precursor of Romanticism—but his scientific purpose also deserves to live—the harmonization of modern science (Linnaean binomial taxonomy—still in use today) with hermetic theory of the Sacred Earth—biophilia—Gaia Hypothesis—etc.

Parsing the Garden

"Fuck you, Derrida, Erasmus Darwin said,
origin is beautiful as black
and centers whirl around us as we round them in."
— Gerrit Lansing, "In Erasmus Darwin's Generous Light"

"Organic happiness" (Survival of the Happiest):

limestone hills: "mighty monuments
of past delight"

to enlist Imagination under the banner
of Science: all natural objects
allied by affinities & analogies—the
CENTRAL IDEA

Rosicrucian doctrines originally
the names of hieroglyphic figures
representing the elements

a cold bath erected by Sir John Floyer
adapted to love-scenes
near Litchfield

Eros, or Divine Love, producing
the world from the egg of Night
as it floated in Chaos

the Egyptian Medusa
the mysterious Roger Bacon invents gunpowder
& tyrants tremble on their blood-stained thrones

antique gems & cameos
the Electric Kiss
Fairy rings produced by lightning
the Hermetic adept uses invisible ink

the Golden Age "had a real existence"
hieroglyph of cosmogenesis
Gnomes teach salinization
inconstant Jove's amours as chemical hieroglyphs

And conscious Nature owns the present God.

Wedgewood's Anti-slavery Cameo
Portland Vase—Eleusinian Mysteries
praise for American & Irish struggles
Hill lighted hill, & man electrified man

the Transmigrating *Ens*
defense of Pythagoras on metempsychosis
Adonis emblem of resuscitated matter

And all the chequer'd landscape seems alive

Water returns to sea
circulation of blood—micro/macrocosmic theory
or do some animals change their forms
gradually & become new genera?

each bud has *sensitive* sensorium
brain nerves & muscle
& the water spirits disperse
like water spiders or northern nations
skating on the ice

Love & Beauty rule the willing world
Mongolfier's Balloon
Proserpine: marriage of etherial spirit
w/ earthly materials

the GREAT SEED evolves disclosing All;
LIFE *buds* or *breathes* . . .
cf. Linnaeus's ingenious comparison of
butterfly & flower (petals as wings, etc.)—
was the first insect a detached pistil?

Camera Obscura
Inchanted Garden
the reverse of Ovid the great Necromancer
ED restores plants to human form
Vegetable Loves

seed that flies on plumes
baby spiders on gossamer
Mongolfier's Balloon

High raised the chemists their Hermetic wands.

Papaver—sounds like 1st hand experience
no doubt ED prescribed laudanum
invented by Paracelsus

Pythian priestess intoxicated on laurel
Fuseli's Nightmare
Poison Upas Tree of Java

Newton‘s comparison of musical notes
& colors of the spectrum
“luminous music”—not so absurd
when the blind man asked if scarlet
was like a trumpet’s sound

Thus when pleased Venus, in the southern main,
Sheds all her smiles on Otaheite’s plain,
Wide o’er the isle her silver net she draws
And the Loves laugh at all, but Nature’s laws.

Manzilat

Images spring forth with flowers in their claws
like link-boys lurching out of dark alleys
28 asterisms light up in pinball sequences
ladies in chariots—lion-headed geeks—
lunar mansions of the Arabs acc. to al-Biruni
convex Dutch anatomy theater w/ four aisles times 7 seats
Your Eye on stage peering over the footlights
Saturn/Earth, asafoetida—Jupiter/Air, dandelion
Moon & Water the poisons & phantastica, Moon as Soma
patron of the Lunar Society & its hermetic shadows
Watt & Wedgewood stoned on nitrous oxide
mechanicalized like a gigantic steam calliope
but only in your brain, Bruno-the-Elephant
click-clack, pressed flowers, a funereal artform
or half-forgotten dream of flying to Gloucester Mass.
"Think in different categories," cabinets of curiosities
earliest childhood memory of a color: green
every ditchweed a star fallen from the ancestral cell
on parade like Philadelphia Mummers or Shriners
triumphal Crewes of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*
or *Circus of Dr Lao*, & the plants sing to us
palimpsestic melismata heaped over the corpse
of Linnaeus in the garden till it blooms.

Eclogues

to the ghost of Warren G. Sherwood (d. 1947)

I

the god rejoices in
uneven numbers

you hazel trees & rivers testify
to nymphs

Botanists of the Invisible

rivulets lined with watercress
Indo-Aryan
coprotopophiliac
Mexican-Agrarian
Greek Revival
Swedenborgian &
elegantly boring

II

white privet-blossom falls

"Polar Bear Sex"

Snow the fifth element
perversion & narrative
true oil of the Celestial Bear.

Culture is weather
Civilization is just bad air.

Rotten snow & mist recirculate
in repeated distillations under
sky's closed lid

III

Pang Yang

let's get over it this mourning for lost economies
like gentlemen farmers with a taste for Pindar
if you know what I mean.

They sent an orator for the Grange Hall
destroyed by fire & ice Rosendale Jan. '04
cold flames hovered & halo'd his head
like the Prophet in the miniature.
And a minute of silence
for silence itself.

"1888: Savages in Ulster County
People Who Live In Burrows
As Wolves & Foxes": a letter bomb
sent by akashic carrier pigeon to implode
the dreams of aesthete hermaphrodites:

> . . . a tribe in the mountains called Pang Yang
> white negro & Indian blood
> in summer pick berries, and sell
> fruit to speculators . . . language a
> dialect of Holland Dutch with Indian tongues
> Mohican . . . Delaware . . . The marriage rite
> unknown and disregarded . . . [text missing] . . .
> dugouts in the side of a hill, with a blanket
> bung to keep out wind & rain
> extremely filthy

. . . over six feet, swarthy as a Malay
piercing black eyes. When a boy
the writer remembers an aged woman in
a dress made of patchwork quilt
like Joseph . . . spent all their lives
within an hour's journey of the Hudson
but have never seen a steamboat . . .
shelter in the mountains . . . Tories . . . slaves
like gipsies buried in the past

a tissue of lies
You Ask Too Much

They leap
they fly back into the past
like startled doves.

IIII

all fruits grow in all places

trees gloved in ice
play the sun :
organists at Ste. Sulpice

so thin & glassy
not even dogs can
hear them.

Plutarch Swamp: the Rod & Gun Club: front
for an ancient secret society of initiation
(sexual gingerbread) adjoining State land
mountain views location location location.

Sky is a mask of itself as sky: of course
an emblem of the Invisible would disappear.
We need a country Sibyl to predict
a country messiah—a rural seer

to emerge from her bottle, pop out of her silver loaf
foretell a rural jack-of-hearts Novalis
her trailer immobilized by creepers & blight

a paraclete more beautiful than Elvis.
But she retires to her cave beside the ruined canal
& speaks no more into the silky night.

Each page a crystal ball. Ossendowski, Le Roi du Monde, the Black Lama, Sven Hedin, Sir Aurel Stein, lost Hebrews of Afghanistan, terrorist caves of Arghatta. Or some 19th century spa. Or from Ireland—or back to Ireland, not sure which—each paragraph a hand grenade of perfume that lingers even after one wakes from veridical dream with all the usual vague premonitions, graveside ceremonies, unpaid stipends, empty orders of nobility, titular bishoprics of cities long buried beneath sand. A six pipe problem as Holmes would say. Messiah as surrealist outrage.

Oratory & Pro-Cathedral: a rented parlor in some decayed genteel neighborhood where it always seems to be raining. The heavens open & something comes down on a cloud—anything you like—just so long as it's not more of this vile bourgeois transparency. I see the miraculous image. Shots ring out in the cemetery, a salute to fallen martyrs. Men in drenched trenchcoats vanish behind obelisks & weeping angels as the police pull up. Cheerless as the basement of a Union Hall, metal folding chairs, acidic coffee, old Italians nodding off, anarchist sermons, funerals of dead comrades, pallid young men in raincoats, widows in black, the same faces for 6000 years. No going back. We still have the keys to our houses in Grenada, heavy as tuning forks, crusted with verdigris & ochre.

V

Rodomancy

The very idea of mown lawn
cries out for some violation some rain of frogs
or blood, Voltaire in mid-air, blue lobsters
dubious Marian apparitions or a dead dog
floating in the swimming pool
doorway to the n^{th} dimension.

Naturally enough they fail to gel, those
moments of tranquility recollected in emotion
whirling to make ourselves dizzy & collapse
on the mown lawn beneath little rainbows
from the sprinkler
or poling a boat
thru liquifact August's atmosphere
upon atmosphere, estuarial & briney
with someone whose name I can't mention
there were repercussions there were anti-pastoral
forces at work
& no Theocritus
to witness that tenderness
so alien to science.

Because violence & tenderness
are complicit & linked in the
deep wellsprings of etc.

Little red humming devils
take over the courthouse
& burn the archives.

VI

Silenus wants *in*. Fat but not flabby
rubicund rotund & drunk as skunk
shameless naked divine stumblebum
leaning lurching luxuriantly on shoulder
of attendant grinning impish faun
to keep from falling off his ass onto his ass
I ask you is this the orisha we want
to ride our eclogue like a horse or hearse
astride the coffin bottle in hand
& pipe of hash, astride the barrel
like a rocket to the Moon: our male Muse?
our role model? this ithyphallic troll?
Silenus wants *out*. He demands a paean
he loves a parade. He presages the Spring.

VII

weave three knots

Arcadia Subdivided
Nymphs & Fauns Say
Not In My Back Yard

no toxic dump in the Castalian Spring.
Must we slog

thru bogs of nostalgia toward some chicken farm
some closet stuffed with old National Geographics
hand-tinted naked natives, victims
of the colonial gaze?

Landscapes respond to thoughts that last centuries
always haunted whether by bushspirits or
real estate developers

including this high moral ground, this refusal
of interpretation.

According to a Prophetic Hadith the streambeds of Hell
at Time's End will grow green with watercress
even in New Jersey

each one glowing with an aura that'd knock
Mme Blavatsky's socks off

a sort of "Utopian Minimum."

Like someone else's private property
with angry dogs.

Ye shepherds heaved an elizabethan sigh
like laundry on a cloudless day
as they vanished into the maw of the picturesque
so many Harlequins fingers to their lips

and that says it all. In fact
given the whole 20th century, far too much.
Possible bones have begun to speak
or even ourselves in bone tones
refusing to be translated.
Now corn grows
somethow it's always the distant past
or revolutionary future. Pastorale's sad burden
can never be buried, like the talkative corpse
in the fairytale.

You'd think rattlesnakes sealed in cans
would strike the reader somehow more mysterious
than mere soup labels: a vicious vichyssoise
poisoned by the venom of its own critique.

O Moon of Alabama O Conceptual Wisconsin
a happy journey by jalopy stands for something else
shimmering void vibrating hissing subterranean tunnel
in some penny dreadful by Sax Rohmer.

He said: Become great by telling secrets
but that was then—when cars had fins
held together with baling wire all the way
from Kansas with an outstanding warrant.

Salt licks lightning rods six-toe'd farmers
constitute effective means of self-censorship
a code of omerta. They call it
lovecraftian, the landscape, but elusive.

They weep real tears out behind the barn
more precious than pearls. Tip becomes Princess Ozma
hovering over the pine barrens like Kuan Yin
in mid-air, ribbons rippling in stiff breezes

from another dimension. Floating over the meadow
behind the abandoned school on County Highway Z
the one we call the Phalanstery, the missing subject
grows up & deserts the poem.

VIII

In the backgrounds of certain emblems
you can see landscape as if stoned
on the Stone.
The same atmosphere suffuses
nudist photos in 50s Nordo-Baltic mags—a
glass athanor nesting like UFO
in the Phalanstery garden, holding
tangled white limbs
of hermaphrodites heavily charged with meaning—our
station-wagon our Baba Yaga our
witch-hut on chicken legs that goes
wherever our hearts command with the swiftness of thought.

Some books are angels
others are devils but this library holds
no books that are merely books
for cartesian heads in leyden jars.
The landscape is landscaping the landscaper
in repeated distillations—
a garden for the blind.

VIIII

black violets

Satyr with boner draws curtain back
to reveal scene now green with moss
algae snails & deep shade
a Green Messiah
not descending from clouds so much as
rising from Earth, from Hollow Earth

or Jesus as a snake

an ecology of the unnatural

a fishbowl we're
trying to escape even at the risk
that pure air will choke us.

X

Pistol-packin
skeletons on bicycles
reefers in their teeth
rip thru Erasmus Darwin's Botanic Garden
of flowering genitalia
Sweet plants
keen in thin high voices, los Niños

Tierra y Libertad equals
pastoral space plus
idyllic conditions
fauns whacking off
wet naiads dry dryads
undines androgynes gnomes
200 banjos &
40 glockenspiels

may have done
time in mental
institutions
alcoholic
seasonal work
gravedigger
applepicker.

Pure country air as deliberate
derangement of senses
woodsqueer
as they say in Maine—a case
of extreme biophilia. An egg
pierced with nails. At best a mere
disturbance of the
noösphere.

A Note On Pang Yang

Now a ruin near Lloyd, NY, settled by early followers of Jemima Wilkinson, "The Publick & Universal Friend", the Quaker Savioress whose ghost was often seen there—even tho she lived & died near Penn Yan, an entirely different place (on Keuka Lake in Yates Co., Upstate). The place-name "Pang Yang" is a "corruption" of Penn Yan.

The Publick & Universal Friend actually died twice: once in 1776 and once in 1819. The first time however she was raised from the dead. During her second life she maintained telepathic contact with Pang Yang, and after her second death she continued to guide or at least appear to her disciples & their descendents.

Warren G. Sherwood, local & locally-born historian & poet, saw the *Lady in Gray* as a youth, and later rescued much Pang Yang history—altho he in turn lost much of his work during his last alcoholic decline. Most of it remains unpublished.

The quotation in Eclogue III is from an unidentified crumbling newspaper clipping of 1888. Nearly every statement in it is wrong or deeply distorted by then-chic eugenicist ideology and disinfo.

The Pang-Yangers lingered on till the 1970s. Tho poor & eccentric they were scarcely degenerate:—the "last" Pang-Yanger, Levi Calhoun (d. 1975), a legendary strong man, could lift hay-wagons & out-run electric trolleys.

With sensuous urgency Peter Lamborn Wilson creates notional nations, complex pleasure gardens, then dares us to live in them. He teaches a subtle and necessary science: "liberation from the image through the image."

—Robert Kelly (author of *Lapis*)

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